

what happened is on its way

hands claw the trellis, where everyone meets to
grow their heads. this is where it stands:
someone said it, and someone listened. it wouldn't
mean anything if my life wasn't given to it.
when the song starts, this is no longer a memory.

You are you again.

The clock stops in front of your eyes.

When you were in high school,

you were always tired.

You understand now.

white canvas gurney on metal frame, i can feel the
sheet over my head. black wrought iron
fences this gift of diplomacy.

6:05, outside the studio. the actor pulls them
forward for the delivery. the card opens,
pairs of hands touch my hips.

he touches my cheek. there was no difference.
only the merge. this state exists for the lost
to mirror their essence.

i give him the words and the scene ends.

mask blast of compressed air,
flash electric rods for the shot.

Snap into place.

Raw back from the repeated carpet burn.

**The hair on his arms brush your neck,
he holds you like her.**

**Better to glue your mouth
than let the dirty words come.**

You are ordered to let it in.

i walk across the street to the overcoat,
they tell me you've been written out.

in the long run, this is nothing.

we'll return to white and back to the role again.

while i'm here, i wanted you.

oh well.

pandora

2:05 outside the wall, she pulls the tape from the pole. nausea drips from the chair where she sits.

when it's over, she'll make the call. verbal confirmation, she asks again. topics divided by act. each account displays the answer. respond with **here.**

he shares the tuscan remnants, flipped to showcase thread bare pink lace, stacked on stiff tan linen. one by one, plosives in count against blue light mirror on frame, waiting. the pool - pushing the balloon in. lifts hair against the mouth. yellow stripes between cold white, she comes to rake the leaves. it's not physically possible - learn the new tongue. was it inside you? front, or behind? digital? oral? did someone take pictures? was it someone like you? were they bigger? was there an automatic response? how many times did it happen? no one else in the world knows this feeling. no one else understands what you have **here.**

faces change and it doesn't matter. all i see is chest. the spindles wrap ankles, friction rolls back my shirt and i take the linen with me. mask cuffs my face. i lay on the bed, alert and exposed.

you'll be awake during the procedure so we can make sure it's alert and functioning when we separate. the hollow tube sucks my tongue. i feel

she had been sleeping in it, on the couch pullout. it's wrinkled at the wrap party. everyone follows the formal code left clean from their suitcases. the mother begs her to take it off but he said *this was meant to form a woman's body*. not enough time passes to know this is the week it ended, because it started.

a local DJ hosts karaoke in the middle of the hall, lights dimmed. party city LED disco balls flash across the room. various crew stumble to the crowded platform, it's really nothing. she's not even supposed to be there. the director takes off both of her shoes, lined in neon, shaking printed letter copies in the air.

do you know who you've been giving yourself to?

the elective improv class at the charter, teaching them how to make furniture of themselves. carved by hand. trash bags taped to the backs of chairs for tunnels. inside the walls at 4am, searching on the carpet for the braces and the letter with the heart through it. face pushed into the couch after she falls asleep, lights out while the st. augustine boys pull for an ankle. a fake gun is as deadly as a real one. writing it out under the franchise until he got the proper credit for his work. confirmation for those who wait for marriage, the importance of finding the one who looks like they can take it hard. he made the list.

you were a good boy

it was pinned from the post, someone took down

scraps of letters are what stay here

you, scrubbed the same as anyone
from the curve of your hand
all you wanted was white

i was the one who watched
from the slats, i'm the one.
when it's over, i'll make the call.

women take their toll.
bleed until good as dead.

there are no answers,
no questions from me.

i replay the video and
think of your cheeks,
flushed cheeks.

i get what i want

I held onto the railing behind her on the train. My stomach pressed against her the entire trip, knowing she was feeling it between her shoulders. When we got out, I pretended to drop it. I brushed my elbow against her breast, and reached the corner by the time it was noticed.

She helped with what we couldn't carry. Her fingers fucked up the belt, so I did it for her. I left my hands there. It didn't leave as many marks this time. We watched television back at the house. I saw her sitting on the arm of the chair. I kept my eyes closed while I pretended to breathe, and didn't say anything as I felt the tugging in my hand. She went to bed, and I climbed through the screen.

She hid under the steel railing until I could get her to come out with what I offered. I tried to drag her out with each hand wrapped around her ankles, but I should know by now that it's trifle things that get the job done. The corner of a small blanket more than any person or animal or place or item or anything else in the entire world.

We took her in again, and they didn't question the documents or spotting. They showed her the chart, I left the room so they could ask the question. I came back in, and we left together. The night after, she tried it. Stupid fucking bitch with a few chewed

the mirror

they center the wide grey plain between the lawns.

six, seven pairs change space.
cargo pants press bare.

they move in singular step with each she takes.

fingers hook around every crack
as they drift to the ground.

twitter says it's this building.
intercom moves from windows,
it's easy to know where they're coming from.
grass to spread knees on the shift beneath.
equal level on the hill contacted with a single eye,
aware with breath on her back.

full strokes, motion splayed on gravel.
you should know it's only a spasm.
there's no difference between us.
not really.

about the search history on the family computer.
The little drugs they give her to get along.

What she would trade to be able to have more than
the twin mattress in the corner of the dining room. If
she dilates so it doesn't hurt when he forces it
inside before he goes to work in the morning. Does
she cry every time, and wish she could wake up
and be anyone, anywhere else. I wondered how
long it would continue on with them. I wondered if
when she scrubbed her hands bare doing the
dishes in the afternoon, she thought of me.

The next year he came back to show me the
pictures of the flowers and precious trinkets on the
corner by the front yard of the apartment complex.
Metal plaque in the bench beside the cracked
sidewalk with small flecks in the cement. Her small
picture engraved with the words
We will always be together.

wipes angled panel between slats
placed stale within itself
fingers trace bakelite

that's because it's true love.

the circular drain of the glass
breath cycles ignore the space
tucked in chamber

you can open them

the sound of cars decides who stays
skirt pulls down, stands to dust
each frame a picture in reverse

line drawn in subtle variations of blue
everything ends in white slate
paradise is where you are now

yourself involuntarily scream about how
much you fucking love cock.

You're lucky to innately know that this is your
purpose, and every moment of the day you don't
spend getting fucking pounded by a nameless man,
with your face pressed between the frame and the
crack in the motel mattress in your little world, with
a little tv in the corner playing the same cable loop
on silent, with the little permanent bottle of lube on
the nightstand, with the little pillow you hide behind
when you get scared, with the little pictures he
takes, the little pictures he stores in the book, and
the little drugs he gives you, is a waste of the
sagging body that should have been removed
decades ago. Where did your world go?

You need to ask yourself: What are the chances
that you could hear someone talking you through it
again? What are the chances that someone could
rub you slowly again? What are the chances there
could be anyone looking for more than a waiting
room? If you're lucky, someday there will be
someone who can kiss you. If you're lucky, there is
someone who will like you. What are the
fucking chances of that?

Talk about time being done. Your same fantasy of
someone bashing your head in to let the flowers
grow through the soil. The same one of you curling
up like a dying dog under the warm skylight on your
skin in your childhood living room. The same one

faces change, this is the only thing that is ever
needed to hear.

concrete cements this
bristles between the crack grow and blow away

the lead runs out

real live girl

When you stand at the edge before they can clear
the corner. You can meet their eyes when they see
you, and they make the split decision to find a
direction. That's the good one.

I watch them pace along the outer edge of the
street to avoid the sidewalk. It's funny how they do
that. The big ones clomping with a drag across the
concrete from the injury. All of the little ones. The
ones with enough physical vitality
to look straight past.

Hold it close enough to your pockets for them to
wonder what's happening in front of them. Better if
you're hard. Better if you see them trace the
outline.

I bring it to her. The safe one. When they can't
shake the feeling like they're one in the world and
they look to you with their big wide eyes and a
clinging touch like you know a different kind of
sympathy. They're the only one who has ever felt it.
Each shake in their hands makes mental lines back
to where it came from. It's not special.
I pet her hair and hope that's enough.

I know I was inside, but I remember watching it
through the window in the office. The blinds were
drawn but if you pressed your face against the

THE GAP

drawing dandelions in dull point, tethered in
alternate rows shrinking until they disappear
twin bed beside parents, pushing the body in the
crack until it sinks into the floor.

the closet beside it in the mirror wall, small legs
folded between suitcases in numb spasms

there has never been anything else. you were loved
when small, and became a choice. sit there on the
couch with legs spread, hand on stomach and say
nothing. hair yanked as steps fall down thinking
about the wife in the ceiling.
it's an affair. this is the role.

exlover stench sprayed on red tank, chosen. flesh
torn, touched later. this one breathes
and he makes the connection.

office papers, lesson plans strewn below feet
creviced in shopping bags. on the floor, blue pencil
reads: *write something good or you'll be
questioned.*

pictured:
self in corners, underneath. the knife slides in
repeat, hands ring the neck

doors open to the loved one, raises arms. they see

*when i was little i would imagine:
being in your class or in the bathroom or in a room.
someone rips my clothes off and hits me with their
fists and hurts me really deep on the floor until i
know i'm dead. you come in and notice him and tell
him to get off me. we've never made love before,
but you were someone who made me feel safe and
you always secretly really loved me. you are the
only one in the entire world who knew what my dad
did because i trusted you enough. i loved you.*

*this is the first time you've seen me naked. my body
is really hurt and there's a lot of blood, and i'm
shivering in front of you. you unbutton your pants
and force your love onto me, telling me how much
you are grateful for me and what a wonderful time it
was getting to share a life with me
for just a single moment in time.*

*i'm really scared and we cry together and you hold
me tighter and tighter, gasping in your arms until i
feel you fill me with your warm love and i die.*

I pound her cunt on the mattress, fast enough to
get myself off without involving her. I pull out and
cum on her stomach. She takes what we agreed
on.

Making the connection is enough.

THE LAST NIGHT OF THE FAIR

they bring the younger one named brittany,
who isn't afraid to try new thrills.

on the railing he presses hips on hips,

arm around the shoulder

mother frames you in death,

i've felt my full life beating your chest

*how wonderful it is to be lifted from the soil again -
look below. aren't you glad i'm not tied by hand,
pulled from the rocks at the bottom of the stand?*

lined at the back of a laugh. the rabbit in
the carrier rests on victoria's stomach.

it's nothing special, bodies writhe.

give it up while you're still wanted.

the center of the wheel spins and she stares into it.

You remember:

You are what you say you are.

You remember:

I am a black wall.

I am a girl, no older than five.

I'm in the air, and I'm upside down.

I'm upside down, and I'm turning around,

and around, and around.

his hands scale smaller on adolescent
flip flops between dirt, open blood blisters rubbed

*Do you think this Wednesday would work?
We'll need a few extra hours this summer.*

*I think she just wants to relax with me until she
leaves in the Fall.*

It's okay. I'd be happy to help.

The man and the girl sit in his truck. Older model
with miniature seats facing each other, compacted
in the back. Roll-down windows. Polyester rubs
against her back, broken air conditioning with the
windows up. He drives while she
stares down at her knees.

So, what are you up to?

Do you have a boyfriend this year?

*No, I don't have a boyfriend. I don't think boys
really like me, but that's okay.*

*Sorry kid, that's sad. Why don't you talk to me
about it? Let me pull over.*

He drives down a couple blocks, and pulls into an
abandoned corporate car park.

*It must be pretty hard being a girl your age, and
being so lonely. All those hormones rushing
around. Your generation has changed a lot. I
remember when I was your age, I'd spend all day
with my girlfriend. She looked a little like you. We'd
have a little fun in the car her father bought her for*

tacoma curves the corner. pulls into lot
greedy. locks black gate under darkness
thinned hair button down moves with wind
children must take love while it's given.

fingers at keys, father behind him.

stabat mater dolorosa
rehearsed motion,
child partaking the
pain of the mother

it was such a sad sound
your hands each day
from the crying room

as i formed bruised,
tender beheld.
my favorite.

been four weeks since my last confession
familiar sound of breath recursive
echo wound

right hands meet the divider between them
in puddle on the floor

you are forgiven

The Director, no more than 23. Skinny kid with bad
skin and rimless glasses, wearing a drenched polo
and sweatbands covering old scars. Long brown
hair. Pathetic. Pulls the chair out beside the
monitor, and motions to offer it to her.

She coughs and her face goes back to normal. She
looks pissed. She takes a robe from the PA. He
leans in to whisper to her.

I would have thought you got it after the first few
dozen times I screamed my lungs out, but yes, I'll
try scared. You did great. We're just going to try that
last part again, alright? Open up a few centimeters
wider, and look in the direction of the light until your
eyes get tired. This time try to make it a little louder,
try to make her look a little scared.

Get more intense with it.

Look, just think about it. I'm sure as a woman you
can understand. It's her first time. She's never
fucked before, and she's nervous. Inexperienced.
She's being adventurous by letting this old guy
finger her around. He's breaking her hymen up, and
she's feeling something she's never felt before. The
feeling of true freedom. Pain.

This is the first stage of her personal and sexual
awakening, it sets the scene for when she comes
back to stab him in the mansion, before the ending.

I'll see if I can muster up the feeling to kill someone.

presses wet thumb against tender
yellow concealer crusted
iron print cloth to face

*life is never kind to small and needy.
your mind is just like mine.*

*you're normal.
an average mewling mouth.
they don't know that they love you.
not yet.*

*come to my arms,
i'll make you special
together, sleep into
the white and sightless*

Cut to her cradled in his chest on the leather built-in
couch. Watching the city loop on the television.

*How was he this time?
The window situation is over. Kind of cute, like a
panting dog. It's easier to just let him do it.*

*This is our fourth?
Fifth.
Your first starring.
Maybe my last.*

*I love him, but he acts like a child.
He still is one, mostly.
You sure you want to stay this time?
I want to be seen.
Retirement isn't always a choice.*

Eyes stare white on the weather. Legs crossed
sitting on the cheap blue printed motel quilt without
underwear. Holed out oversized walmart t-shirt,
chopped wig. She holds a greased bag before the
lights heat up the morning, fingers rubbed on shirt.
Hash browns and egg sandwiches. Sound of cops
running around outside the blackout windows, near
the grey Mazda with the marks
on the passenger door.

The Man stands close to grab her head, pressing
her face against the hard seam in his pants. He
turns to unzip them, and we hear a gagging sound,
her face obscured aside from
her watering - or crying - eyes.

Center: *stand even, hands on hips.*

Forward: *right foot ahead, arms behind back.*

Left: *left foot extended, arms crossed.*

Right: *right foot extended, arm on left hip.*

Back: *crossed legs, arms at sides.*

Swollen cheeks in the meeting room. Five steps in gaff tape on the floor. The motions are the same, akin to ballet positions in memorization but not as fundamental. It's about repetition.

She wears a yellow floral dress. Tags hidden in crevices, standing in front of a grey backdrop. The mother sits outside of the frame, beside Laurel.

I don't like the way the children look in these. You understand the meaning. You're photographing pigeons, not the deep focus. Staged out of proportion. I wish I knew enough to tell you everything you need to know.

I'll try to take a better set this time.

The Photographer crouches under light buzz, borrowed from the portrait studio floors below. Setup identical, inch by inch. Steps tracked, Laurel yells instruction. Target wide through scope.

The girl is still. He matches eyes.

Wide, white. Overexposed.

Tears fall.

have to go

The Director lifts The Actress by her chin, wiping her mouth bled white with his thumb.

Show me your eyes.

Wet transfers shaking hands. Urgent with tears.

She meets him with something that can only happen once.

He checks the camera.

Can you do that again,

exactly the same as last time?

The set without people becomes a museum. You look around, and know exactly where you stand.

You're beautiful. Up close, the way your hair reflects the light. Soft yellow red. Your lips, your

cheeks, so.

The Director masturbates inches away from her thigh, panting in whisper.

Can you fucking help me out with this one?

He grabs her wrist, forcing her palm on him.

She slaps him. He comes on her hand.

Spoiled brat.

Did you fuck him?

Yes.

Do you fuck everyone?

No.

Why won't you fuck me?

She presses the iron against the
side of her chin and waits.

The car is cold. It smells of white bags filled with old
hash browns, permeated by sickness. Lights blend
together in the unfocused visual hum of an iPad
flashing primary colors in repetitive haze.

She thinks of nothing.

Oiled face, small stains on long sleeve v-neck.
Extended stomach above low rise bell-bottoms,
peeking with movement. Hidden in her hand: a
small bobby pin with the rounded ends chewed off.
She cradles the sharp edge against
the center of her palm.

*Don't you want to go to heaven like Mommy and
Daddy?*

The outside feels like walking in bare skin. People
look at her. She can tell by the sound of her
mother's footsteps, breaking in rhythm
to follow eyelines.

*It's not you. They stare at everyone here.
There's no difference between a pretty girl
and an ugly one.*

White fluorescent tile and cheap disinfectant, legs
swinging from the single anachronistic wooden chair in
the renovated waiting room. Remaining fasteners
for a CRT that isn't there anymore. She plays a

*Have you ever touched a woman before?
I want to be gentle with you.*

Grabs by the base of his neck, knocking flatline.
Legs consume him, struggling for breath as she
grinds against his body while he's deep inside.

*I finish hard, fast, and often. Don't be afraid to
pound my cervix. Make me scream so hard
that it rings forever.*

You're hurting me.

Grasping voice as she clasps harder around his
throat. He comes instantly inside her.

Face buried in her breasts, wrapped around her
waist. Hyperventilating as he sobs into skin.
Grabbing onto fistfuls to pull him out, like a scared
kid begging to be picked up when
they're too tired to walk.

Thank you.

She stares at the overhead grid of the black
container. In the morning, before the crew starts
arriving, the changes are made.

